

TAB B

HUNGARIAN REFUGEE PROCESSING IN AUSTRIA

1. As of 0900, 8 December 1956, a total of 121,504 Hungarian refugees had arrived in Austria since the outbreak of the rebellion on 23 October. Of this total, 49,105 had already migrated further westward, leaving 72,399 remaining in Austria. The Austrian government has repeatedly urged the twenty governments who have agreed to accept Hungarian immigrants to move these persons out of Austria with the greatest possible speed. As a result, normal screening processes have broken down completely, and only meager biographic data are available on the mass of refugees. The following paragraphs describe the refugee situation as it is reflected in cabled reports from official U.S. sources in Austria.

OFFICIAL AUSTRIAN SCREENING

2. As the refugees cross the Austrian border, they are gathered by the police and border officials into temporary collection centers in the border area. There they fill out an Austrian registration card containing name, date and place of birth, and last residence in Hungary. A copy of this card is sent to Vienna for the Austrian government's central security files. Within a matter of hours the refugees are moved to larger camps and collecting points (most of the public schools in the provinces along the Austrian border are being used for this purpose) where they may remain for one or two days before moving on to the country of their ultimate destination, to another more permanent refugee camp, or to housing facilities on the local economy if they intend to remain in Austria and have friends or contacts who can take care of them. At each step in their movement from camp to camp a new registration card identical in form to the above cited is made out and sent to Vienna. In this manner the Austrian security authorities hope to keep track of the location and processing of each refugee.

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3. Identity Documents: At either the first or second stop the refugee is issued a gray Austrian identity card valid for one month only. In addition to the basic biographic data recorded when he is registered, this card contains a certification that the refugee has requested asylum and notes that his case has not been investigated. If the refugee remains in Austria for longer than one month this gray card must be renewed by the Austrian police, and before renewal is granted a file check will be made by the federal security authorities.

4. Security Suspects: The task of physical processing has apparently made it impossible for the Austrian authorities to undertake any file checks or security screening as the refugees arrive. Many refugees, however, have volunteered derogatory information about their compatriots. In these cases the suspect refugee is pulled out of the normal flow and sent in custody to Vienna for police interrogation. As of 8 December about one hundred cases of this type--identified by denunciation or by suspicious behavior--were detained in Vienna. These individuals are allegedly low level Communist party members or AVH informants who for the most part do not desire to return to Hungary. The police interrogation reports are being sent daily to the CIA representative in Vienna. Although the Austrian authorities have not yet decided how they will dispose of these suspected persons, they are legally entitled to keep them under detention for three months. This will allow ample time for complete interrogation, file checking, fingerprinting, and other necessary investigative measures.

5. Collection of Counter Intelligence Information: It has not been possible for the Austrian authorities to initiate a system of informants in any of the camps or collection centers. They estimate this will remain impossible until after the great mass of refugees have left the country. Nevertheless, a fair amount of counter intelligence data has been volunteered by the refugees at each step of their processing. A large number of refugees have made it a point to identify to screening officials AVH informants and officers, both in the refugee flow and among those remaining inside Hungary. All such information brought to the attention of

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Applications for renewal of the refugee identity card mentioned above will be checked against the Austrian central files before the card is renewed for another thirty-day period. Although Austrian authorities recognize the desirability of thorough screening, more detailed interrogation, fingerprinting, photographs, and document photocopying, personnel shortages have prevented implementing such a program even if extra funds were to be made available.

MILITARY INTERNEES

6. Those persons who crossed the border in uniform, and those who arrived armed, proclaiming themselves to be members of the Freedom Fighters, have been considered combatants within the meaning of the Geneva Convention and have been separated and were interned under Austrian military jurisdiction at Camp Siezenheim near Salzburg. Approximately one thousand were held. The Austrian government has decided to release these internees on 8 December 1956 and to treat them as normal refugees; nine hundred registered for Western immigration or requested asylum in Austria. Ninety-eight indicated a desire to return to Hungary and will be permitted to do so. Although this group has been under more strict control than the mass of refugees, the extent of screening activity and interrogation by the Austrian army is not known.

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GENERAL IMMIGRATION PROCESSING

10. The information available on the operations of other Western governments in processing refugees for immigration indicates that only the most cursory screening takes place in Austria. Many of these governments, in response to urgent appeals from Austria, have run trains into the border areas, loaded refugees within a few hours of their escape, and dispatched them immediately. Under these conditions, it must be expected that very little information other than name and birth data has been recorded before the refugee's departure from Austria. A report from the U.S. Embassy, Vienna, dated 0900, 4 December 1956, showed that 1,431 refugees had left Austria for resettlement in the United States. Figures for other countries as of the same time follow:

Switzerland	7,131
Germany	5,171
Netherlands	4,338
Sweden	2,112
United Kingdom	7,244
Australia	150
Canada	1,443
Belgium	3,002
Eire	357
Luxemburg	185
Italy	2,126
Denmark	<u>1,000</u>

TOTAL 37,766

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IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

12. Visa Cases: The refugees who wish to immigrate to the United States fall into two categories: Those who are being admitted under the original quota of 6,500 (specially designated but legally under RRP provisions) and the 15,000 who will be admitted as "parolees" (now called Emergency Admittees or EMADS). Against the first quota, the American Consulates in Vienna and Salzburg are now processing over 8,000 applicants. The basic screening load for those in the first category has been on consular personnel in Vienna and Salzburg (Refugee Relief Program personnel in Vienna are largely engaged in clearing up a backlog of eighteen investigations under the RRP, which ends on 31 December). On 16 November, the Department of the Army acknowledged a request to release to RRP sixty to eighty civilian employees from Germany to assist in refugee processing in Austria, but it is not known whether or not these persons are now working in Austria. The processing for the original quota of 6,500 visa applicants included the following steps:

- a. The refugee applies at the consulate and submits limited personal data during a short interview. To be considered eligible he must have left Hungary on or after 23 October, must meet medical standards, and must have assurance of an American sponsor (arranged through voluntary agencies) before his departure.

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13. Parole Cases: Processing of the 15,000 refugees who will be admitted to the United States on parole will begin in Vienna on 10 December. As worked out between the State Department and I&NS officials, there will be no preselection process; applications will be accepted from any refugee who appears at either of the two American consulates in Austria. The refugee must, however, possess the gray refugee identity card issued by the Austrian police. His name will also be checked against the consulate's file of visa rejects. The refugee, helped by a Hungarian-speaking employee of the embassy, will then fill out a single page I&NS form listing basic biographic data. Following a cursory physical examination, mainly to eliminate any persons with communicable diseases, the refugee will be sent to a collecting point to await transport to the United States under ICEM auspices. Present plans call for 700 departures per day by ICEM from Vienna and, after 12 December 1956, 500 more per day by Military Air Transport Service planes from Munich (the refugees will be sent by train to Germany). At a later date, it is planned to ship male refugees to Bremerhaven for sea transport by Military Sea Transport Service. According to a cable from Ambassador Thompson dated 5 December, ICEM plans to airlift a total of 5,000 refugees to the United States: 9,500 will be airlifted by the Air Force from Frankfurt or Munich and the remainder (about 7,000 will be shipped

by sea from Bremerhaven. The Ambassador has recommended, however, in view of ICEM's increased estimate of their movement capability (expected to reach 1,000 per day in the near future), that all shipments be made by air under ICEM auspices with the Air Force in Germany standing by to assist as needed.

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OTHER SCREENING ACTIVITIES

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